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ESTRANGEMENT AND RECONCILIATION
IN THE THOUGHT OF PAUL TILLICH

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GENERAL FACULTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ON BACHELOR OF DIVINITY DEGREES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

BY
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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

DATE

1971

SUBJECT

RE: [illegible]

[illegible text]

1. [illegible]

[illegible text]

2. [illegible]

[illegible text]

3. [illegible]

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INTRODUCTION

Paul Tillich calls his theological method the method of correlation. This method "explains the contents of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence."¹ It is axiomatic for Tillich that a "description of ... (an adequate) method is a description of a decisive aspect of the object to which it is applied."² Thus, it is Tillich's belief that existential questions and theological answers are, in reality, correlates to one another and amenable to a method of correlation. In practice the use of this method means that a systematic theology "should include one section in which the question is developed by an analysis of human existence and existence generally, and one section in which the theological answer is given on the basis of the sources, the medium, and the norm of systematic theology."³ The first of these sections is therefore essentially a philosophical enterprise. It should not be prejudiced by insights gained from a stance within the circle of faith. The second is essentially theological. The answers developed in this section must therefore not be derived from the questions arising

¹Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), Vol. I, p. 60.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 66.

MEMORANDUM

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information regarding the proposed changes to the existing policy on the use of company funds for employee travel expenses. The proposed changes are intended to reduce the company's financial burden while ensuring that employees are able to travel for business purposes.

2. The proposed changes are as follows:

- a. The maximum amount that can be spent on travel expenses per employee per year will be reduced from \$5,000 to \$3,000.
- b. The maximum amount that can be spent on travel expenses per employee per trip will be reduced from \$1,000 to \$500.
- c. The maximum amount that can be spent on travel expenses per employee per month will be reduced from \$1,500 to \$750.
- d. The maximum amount that can be spent on travel expenses per employee per quarter will be reduced from \$4,500 to \$2,250.

3. The proposed changes are intended to reduce the company's financial burden while ensuring that employees are able to travel for business purposes. The proposed changes are based on the assumption that the company's financial situation will remain stable over the next year.

4. The proposed changes are intended to reduce the company's financial burden while ensuring that employees are able to travel for business purposes. The proposed changes are based on the assumption that the company's financial situation will remain stable over the next year.

5. The proposed changes are intended to reduce the company's financial burden while ensuring that employees are able to travel for business purposes. The proposed changes are based on the assumption that the company's financial situation will remain stable over the next year.

Approved: _____
Date: _____
By: _____

in the first. While questions and answers are thus kept separate from one another; because the relationship between them is one of correlation, they must not be separated absolutely. Tillich's argument here is that correlation implies both a discontinuity and a continuity. There is discontinuity between correlates in the sense that the content of an answer cannot be derived from the content of the question. There is continuity in the sense that an answer would be alien to the question were there no correspondence of form.

In religious circles Tillich's explicit treatment of the method of correlation has had the effect of revitalizing an interest in Christian apologetics. In secular circles it has had the effect of throwing many so-called secular issues into a new religious context.

One of the most fundamental and important secular issues to be illumined by Tillich's theological method is the issue of estrangement. Superficially the method of correlation would seem ideally suited to the solution of such a problem. On the one hand, a philosophical analysis of existence should be able to arrive at the fundamental question implied by the fact of estrangement. On the other, guided by the form of the question, theology should be able to supply an answer which would solve, once and for all, the whole difficulty. Unfortunately, when the deeper implications of Tillich's program begin to emerge, serious objections emerge along with them. One reason for these

objections is the fact that Tillich's concept of correlation stands as an affront to a considerable segment of both secular and religious thought. From the secular point of view, Tillich's argument that it is beyond the ability of existence to answer its own problems, constitutes a negative judgement on some of the world's greatest and most respected endeavors. Whether a solution to estrangement be proclaimed in terms of an international communism, in terms of a social gospel, or in terms of a psychoanalytic technique; the bitter truth, according to Tillich, is that all such solutions are doomed to failure. The question of estrangement cannot be answered by existence since existence itself is the problem. Insult is added to this injury by Tillich's further assertion that this conclusion is not based upon theological insight but upon a careful philosophical analysis of existence as it is. There is in existence neither the basis nor the ability with which to answer the problem of estrangement, since there is no feature of existence untouched by the destructive consequences of estrangement. And this, Tillich insists, is a conclusion of reason not revelation.

From the point of view of those who hold that man's problems can be answered only by God, this aspect of Tillich's thought is received with considerable favor. Nevertheless, even from the religious viewpoint objections to Tillich's thought may arise. The nature of these objections and Tillich's reply to them will be made clear

at a later point in this study. For the present it is sufficient to say that the structure of Tillich's theology makes it necessary for him to deny the superiority of Christian faith over a purely secular ultimate concern. While, from a Christian perspective, such a conclusion is highly questionable, it is Tillich's contention that this in no way weakens the validity of Christianity.

There are two reasons for introducing Tillich's thought concerning estrangement and reconciliation by referring to his method of correlation. On the one hand, as Tillich understands them, estrangement and reconciliation are a specific correlation within the broader correlation of existential question and religious answer. The more important reason, however, is that the objections to this understanding arise primarily from the fact that the method of correlation ultimately drives Tillich to the assertion of a paradox. That is to say, with the correlation of estrangement and reconciliation, as with every correlation, the conclusion Tillich reaches is that an answer to the question is impossible, but the answer has already been given.

To the modern mind it is obvious that estrangement in all its aspects is a world problem desperately requiring solution. It is also obvious that Tillich treats the problem with the utmost seriousness. He states in one of his articles, "Modern man has a profound feeling of estrangement

as self-alienation from his genuine and true being, of enmity within himself and within his world, of separation from the ultimate source of being and meaning. Driven by the pain of such self-estrangement he asks the question of reconciliation."¹ In the light of this sense of urgency and seriousness it is not strange then that Tillich's conclusions on the matter are regarded with dismay in some circles. For, on the one hand, Tillich consigns to the wind not only man's most noble attempts at a solution, but also the very possibility of a solution. On the other hand, the only alternative he entertains is the paradox that while a solution is impossible, nevertheless the solution is available to all.

The procedure of this study will be to present Tillich's thoughts concerning estrangement and reconciliation in an attempt to assess the validity of his paradoxical conclusion. At the same time an attempt will be made to assess both the religious and the philosophical objections to such a conclusion. Since, for Tillich, the fact of estrangement permeates the whole of existence, it will be necessary to touch upon almost every aspect of his theology. For this reason the material in this study will be organized primarily along the lines established by him in his *Systematic Theology*.

¹Paul Tillich, "Estrangement and Reconciliation in Modern Thought," Review of Religion, Vol. IX, Nov., 1944.

PART I

CHAPTER I

THE SOURCE OF ESTRANGEMENT

A. Essential and Existential Being.

Philosophically Tillich stands solidly within the tradition of ontological speculation which had its origin in the pre-Socratic concern for the relation of the many to the One; of beings to Being. His indebtedness to this tradition becomes apparent when one considers that, as he sees it, the most crucial concept for an understanding of the situation of man is the transition of being from essence to existence.¹ It is this transition, according to Tillich, which marks the separation of man and of all creation from its essential being and which, as a result, actualizes the primal estrangement in reality from which all others follow.

As the terms indicate, Tillich understands two modes of being; essential and existential. In both modes being, as such, exists. In the first being exists as potentiality. In the second it exists as actuality. In his Systematic Theology² Tillich makes clear what is involved in his understanding at this point by conducting a philological examination of the Latin root of the English word "exist" and

¹Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. II, pp. 29-39.

²Ibid., pp. 19-21.

by relating this examination to the two ancient Greek conceptions of non-being.

The Latin word "existere" originally meant "to stand out of." In this sense the English word "exist" begs the question: Stand out of what? While one may say that to exist is to stand out of non-being, as Tillich points out, "Only that which in some respect stands in can stand out."¹ This is to say that everything consists of both being and non-being. But in view of the fact that the Greeks had two words for non-being, "ouk on" - absolute non-being - and "me on" - relative non-being -, one must ask further: Which type of non-being is it that goes into the structure of reality? For Tillich existence may be either that which stands out of relative non-being (me on) or that which stands out of absolute non-being (ouk on).

The importance of this distinction for Tillich rests in the fact that it provides him with a basis for distinguishing between essential being and existential being. Essential being is that which stands out of absolute non-being as potentiality. That is to say, essential being is relative non-being.² On the other hand, existential being is that which has left the state of essential being; it is potential being or relative non-being, which has become actual.

¹Ibid., p. 20.

²"It is not-yet-being, but it is not nothing." Ibid.

Thus, Tillich can say, "Within the whole of being as it is encountered, there are structures which have no existence and things which have existence on the basis of structures."¹ In this manner Tillich provides for his thought both a clear definition of two of his most significant concepts and a solid grounding within the body of philosophical thought.

B. Existence and the Fall.

In terms of estrangement the most important feature of Tillich's thought is his conception of the relationship existing between the two modes of being. Here, it is to Plato that Tillich turns, since it was preeminently Plato who assigned to the two realms of reality both ontological and ethical value. "Existence for Plato is the realm of mere opinion, error and evil. It lacks true reality. True being is essential being and is present in the realm of eternal ideas, i.e., in essences."² For Tillich the crucial point in the Platonic conception is that "man's existence, his standing out of potentiality, is judged as a fall from what he essentially is."³ That is to say, in Plato man understood his own existence as an estrangement. Here, says Tillich, "the Platonic and the Christian evaluations of existence coincide."⁴

¹Ibid., p. 21.

²Ibid., p. 22.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 23.

It should be noted that while Tillich uses Plato as an illustration of his own concept of estrangement, one must question to what degree this is valid. Tillich makes it clear that for him estrangement means a sufficiently discontinuous relationship so that reconciliation would be impossible from the point of view of the estranged. In this he is trying to safeguard the Christian concept of radical sin. But whether Plato, who viewed the philosophic life as the way back to the "realm of pure ideas" could have understood man's estrangement from his essential self in such a radical sense would appear highly questionable. To be sure Plato would have agreed with Tillich in his stand against Hegelian essentialism - a position which states that "Existence is the logically necessary actuality of essence. There is no gap, no leap, between them."¹ Equally certain would be Plato's stand with Tillich against a thorough-going existentialism which would separate existence entirely from its essence. But Plato could not have agreed with Tillich concerning man's complete inability to bridge the gap between existence and essence. However, while the degree of Plato's agreement with Tillich must be left in some question, the point crucial to Tillich's argument is undoubtedly valid: Plato understood man's existence to be one of estrangement from his essential nature.

¹Ibid., p. 24.

In relation to creation this understanding of existence presented Tillich with a problem. His task was that of relating existence to creation in such a way as to avoid both a radical Hegelianism which would make man in his existence identical with man in his essence, and a radical existentialism which would make man in his essence entirely transcendent and thus irrelevant to man in his existence. To put the problem in religious terms: Tillich was faced with the task of describing existence in relation to creation in such a way that existence could be understood as "fallen" but not completely separated from its essence, and in such a way that the "fall" could be understood as actual but not necessary. This, Tillich felt, was possible on the basis of an understanding of man as "finite freedom."

For Tillich the freedom and the finitude of man place man in relation to a destiny which establishes limits from the past, and in relation to a potential infinity which makes its demands from the future. According to him, it is this situation in its totality which makes possible the momentous transition from essence to existence.

While the concepts of finitude and freedom will be dealt with later, it may be said at this point that, for Tillich, finitude is "Being, limited by nonbeing."¹ It is that which man experiences against the backdrop of a potential infinity. On the other hand, "Freedom in polarity

¹Ibid., Vol. I, p. 189.

with destiny is the structural element which makes existence possible because it transcends the essential necessity of being without destroying it."¹ Thus, while man's essential being as finitude implies a certain fixity which may not be broken without destroying the very character^{of} that being, man's essential being as freedom implies not only the ability to transgress the limits of his finitude but also the ability to surrender his very humanity if he so desired.² The actualization of these possibilities is precisely what Tillich understands to be the cause of man's transition from essence to existence.

Utilizing the Biblical symbol of the "fall" Tillich suggests that the state of essential man (Adam) before the fall may best be described as "dreaming innocence." In defending his choice of the phrase "dreaming innocence" he says, "Both words point to something that precedes actual existence. It has potentiality, not actuality."³ In this way he manages to guard against the misconception of man's pre-existent perfection. That is to say, dreaming innocence can hardly be construed as perfection. Perfection lies in the conscious unity of essential and existential being, not in the mere innocence of essential being alone.

¹Ibid., p. 182.

²Ibid., Vol. II, p. 32.

³Ibid., p. 33.

Before his unactualized possibilities essential man, in his finitude, stands in anxiety. On the one hand, in the face of a potential infinity man's finitude is anxious over its unactualized possibilities. On the other, it is anxious over the ability of freedom to actualize a possibility which might mean the denial of its essential human nature. "Man is caught between the desire to actualize his freedom and the demand to preserve his dreaming innocence ... He experiences a double threat, which is rooted in his finite freedom and expressed in anxiety. Man experiences the anxiety of losing himself by not actualizing himself and his potentialities and the anxiety of losing himself by actualizing himself and his potentialities."¹ The point at which "finite freedom becomes conscious of itself and tends to become actual," Tillich calls "aroused freedom."² The "fall," or the transition from essential being to existential being occurs when this aroused freedom decides in favor of actualization.

C. Existence As Estrangement.

In terms of estrangement the most significant feature of the transition from essence to existence is the change in the nature of being. Before the transition man's essential being is that which both stands in and stands out of

¹Ibid., p. 35f.

²Ibid., p. 35.

absolute nonbeing, was simply finite, i.e., being limited by nonbeing. (For Tillich no moral value is attached to man's finitude; it is simply a condition of being.) After the transition, however, instead of standing out of absolute nonbeing into relative nonbeing, being stands out of relative nonbeing into actuality. In the former what occurs is simple finitude; in the latter what occurs is a radical separation. For Tillich, then, man's existential being, as a standing out of his essential being, is truly a standing out. It is an estrangement. But, and this is one of Tillich's most profound realizations, not only does estrangement imply a separation, it also implies a continued participation. That is to say, since the very possibility of a "standing out" is dependent upon a "standing in," one can only conceive of man's existential "standing out" in terms of his continued "standing in" the power of his essential being. The situation of man in existence then, is a profound dilemma wherein his existence is estranged from his essence while embodying the structures and utilizing the power of that from which it is estranged.

For Tillich, "the transition from essence to existence is the original fact."¹ As such it is the source of every sense of estrangement man experiences. At this fundamental level estrangement between essence and existence manifests

¹Ibid., p. 36.

itself in three forms. First, man in his estrangement exists in unbelief. It should be understood here that, for Tillich, unbelief is the separation of man's will from the will of God for the purpose of standing as an existential being. It is not, as more common usage would have it, a simple lack of certainty about the being of God.

Second, man in his estrangement exists in "hubris" or pride. "Hubris" is understood by Tillich as the basic form of pride or self-elevation wherein the potential infinity of finite freedom is claimed by the finite self as a possession.

Third, man in his estrangement exists in concupiscence. In speaking of this third mark of estrangement Tillich relates it to the first two and thus, links all three together.

"The quality of all acts in which man affirms himself existentially has two sides, the one in which he removes his center from the divine center (unbelief) and the other in which he makes himself the center of himself and of his world (hubris) ... The question naturally arises concerning why man is tempted to become centered in himself. The answer is that it places him in the position of drawing the whole of his world into himself ... Every individual, since he is separated from the whole, desires reunion with the whole ... His poverty makes him seek for abundance."¹

Thus, concupiscence is the desire to reach "unlimited abundance."

¹Ibid., pp. 51-52.

The transition from essence to existence, with all that it implies concerning the nature of man and the character of nature as a whole, is understood by Tillich to be an adequate philosophical explanation of the religious truths relating to man's nature, man's sin, and the fact of creation as presented by Christianity. Tillich points out quite rightly that such an explanation encompasses the truths of both essentialism and existentialism without falling into the errors of either. Moreover, with respect to the two-sided religious problem of sin's inevitability and man's responsibility, Tillich's assessment of the issues involved gives rise to many clear and decisive insights which appear to be quite consistent with the bulk of Christian conviction on the matter.

It must be noted, however, that his explanation is not so final that no further questions can possibly arise. For example, his argument that the "fall" was not necessary would seem to give equal support to the argument that creation was not necessary. To what extent Christianity could support such a belief would appear open to considerable question. Even more questionable than this is the implication arising from the argument that the fall is the act of man. As Tillich presents the argument it becomes clear that, in addition to the fall, and for the same reasons, creation may also be understood as the act of man. Still another question may be raised as to the validity of Tillich's explanation as an explanation. Since existence is the

actualization of finite freedom, and since finite freedom is the essential structure of man, it would appear that one must imagine, at some time prior to existential creation, an "earlier" creation of man's essential being. Viewed in this light, Tillich has not dissolved the problem but merely postponed it.

It might seem that Tillich's thought ultimately leads to an equation of the act of creation and the act of estrangement. Such a conclusion would not be true to Tillich's intention. To be sure the attempt to reach an understanding of the actuality of sin without at the same time implying its necessity led Tillich to portray creation and the "fall" as contemporaneous events. But in no sense did he wish this contemporaneity understood as synonymity. Rather, creation and the "fall" are two distinct consequences of essential man's decision to actualize himself into existence. It is thus existence and estrangement which must be equated, not creation and estrangement.

The examination of Tillich's concept of estrangement must now take the direction indicated by his equation of the state of existence and the state of estrangement. The implication of this equation is that in addition to the appearance of estrangement in man as unbelief, hubris, and concupiscence, the fact of estrangement will also be manifest at every level and in every structure of existence no matter where or when that existence may occur. It is necessary, therefore, to consider estrangement as it appears in Tillich's conceptions of being, reason, and life.

CHAPTER II

ESTRANGEMENT IN BEING

A. Introduction

The nature and extent of estrangement as it appears in being cannot be properly appreciated, in Tillich's terms except in relation to the extraordinary comprehensiveness of the ontology which he proposes. Ontology, for Tillich, is essentially a philosophical enterprise. That is to say, while one may speak philosophically of "the transition from essence to existence" or theologically of "creation and fall," and mean by these the same event, such a methodological option is not valid with respect to ontology. "Systematic theology cannot, and should not, enter into the ontological discussion as such. Yet it can and must consider these central concepts (of ontology) from the point of view of their theological significance."¹ In this way Tillich makes clear that, for him, questions of being are exclusively within the domain of philosophy and should not be prejudiced by the theological insights one might gain from a stance within the circle of faith. One must understand then, that Tillich approaches the question of being as a philosopher and not as a theologian.

¹Ibid., Vol. I, p. 164.

B. The Levels of Ontological Concepts.

The point of departure in Tillich's ontology is man's cognitive encounter with reality. For him, "Inquiring into the nature of reality as such means inquiring into those structures, categories, and concepts which are presupposed in the cognitive encounter with every realm of reality."¹ That is to say, not only is man's cognition of reality the only basis upon which a study of reality is possible, but also, whatever one might discover about reality, it must be such that it can take into account the basis from which the discovery was made. Consequently, to state the presuppositions upon which a cognitive encounter with reality rests is to state all that can be known about the nature of being as such.

From the history of philosophy Tillich distinguishes four distinct levels of ontological concept. Despite the number of presuppositions to cognitive encounter that have been advanced, he feels that each of them can be located in terms of one of these four levels. Thus, the basic level, the level at which the presuppositions to cognitive encounter are most immediate, is that in which the subject-object structure of reality is realized. This structure is, of course, presupposed in the very asking of the ontological question. To even raise the question of being is to presuppose a subject who is aware of standing over against

¹Ibid., p. 18.

being-in-itself as an object. But, it is also the most immediate presupposition to the fact of man's cognitive encounter with reality. For to encounter cognitively is to presuppose a being which encounters and a being which is encountered; that is to say, a being as subject and a being as object. Since being cannot be approached cognitively except within the framework of this polarity, it is axiomatic for Tillich that this basic structure will be reflected in all the other levels of ontological concept.

Since this subject-object structure is determinative for all other levels, at the second level Tillich distinguishes between those ontological elements which point on the one hand to "the self-relatedness of being, its power of being something for itself" and on the other to "the belongingness of being, its character of being a part of a universe of being."¹ That is to say, whatever one presupposes as to the elements of being at the second level they must be cast in terms of polarities. The fact that being as subject inquires about being as object can therefore presuppose individualization, dynamics, and freedom on the one hand, but it must also presuppose participation, form, and destiny on the other.

¹Ibid., p. 165.

The third level of ontological concept concerns the existence of being. That being can be an object of question presupposes the possibility of non-being and issues in the concept of finitude. Finitude, for Tillich, is "being, limited by non-being." The task of ontology at the third level therefore "is the analysis of finitude in its polarity with infinity as well as in its relation to freedom and destiny, to being and nonbeing, to essence and existence."¹

The fourth and final level includes all those concepts which relate to the specific forms of thought and being. That is to say, the ontological question also presupposes the "traditional categories" of time, space, causality, substance, etc.

These then, in barest outline, are the broad features of Tillich's ontology. While it will now be necessary to consider these features in greater detail, it should be kept in mind that the purpose of this paper is not to make an apology for Tillich's ontology. Nevertheless, since what is at stake is his conception of the nature and extent of estrangement, his ontology, and particularly the concept of polarity in his ontology, must be carefully considered. The significance of the polarity concept arises from the fact that in being, estrangement appears as a disruption of the harmony and unity within and between the various ontological polarities. It is essential

¹Ibid.

therefore to understand both the degree to which being is polar in character and the sense in which Tillich understands this polarity. Accordingly, his ontology is important, but only insofar as it is one of the arenas in which the fact of estrangement makes its appearance.

C. Estrangement and Polarity.

Both Tillich's conception of polarity and his understanding of the effect of estrangement can be illustrated in terms of the first level of ontological concepts. For Tillich, the basic structure of reality is the "self-world correlation" in which the subject-object structure of being is realized, and by which man's being is fundamentally, and at all times determined. Self and world constitute a polarity in the sense that there can be no concept of the self except in terms of a world over against which the self stands. Conversely, there can be no concept of a world except in terms of a self which views it as such. Self and world are therefore interdependent and to lose one is to lose the other. That is to say, if the world or the self were to become separated to the extent that no contact between the two remained, both would be destroyed since in the one lies the definition of the other. This, according to Tillich, is precisely what happens under the conditions of existential estrangement. In existence man is:

"free to make his world into an object which he beholds, and he is free to make himself into an object upon which he looks. In this situation of finite freedom he can lose himself

and his world, and the loss of one necessarily includes the loss of the other. This is the basic 'structure of destruction', and it includes all others."¹

Man then, can only be a self to the extent that he has a world and he can only have a world to the extent that he has a self. The more man attempts to assert himself at the expense of his world, the more the polar character of the self-world correlation is destroyed and the more he loses both his world and himself. On the other hand, precisely the same loss would occur if he attempted to affirm the world at the expense of the self.

In terms of polar structure and in terms of the effect of estrangement, nothing more need be said of the second level of concepts than has already been said of the first. Since being cannot be approached except within the framework of a self-world correlation, consequently, all elements at the second level necessarily reflect the polar structure of the first. Both levels are therefore polar, in precisely the same sense, and both suffer precisely the same effects of estrangement.

For other reasons, however, special consideration must be given the polarities of individualization-participation and freedom-destiny. In the first Tillich appears to be somewhat confused as to the precise nature of individualization with the result that the extent of estrangement is

¹Ibid., Vol. II, p. 60.

obscured at a very crucial point. The question left hanging is whether a multiplicity of independent beings in existence is to be understood as a consequence of estrangement or whether multiplicity is simply a feature of being in its essence. The freedom-destiny polarity on the other hand is significant for several reasons. Not only is it the point of origin for both estrangement and any attempt to overcome estrangement, it is also that aspect of being which, under the conditions of estrangement, makes all efforts toward reconciliation, in principle, ultimately ineffectual.

D. Individualization and Participation.

In order to discern the confusion in Tillich's thought with respect to individualization and participation it is necessary to bear two things in mind. In the first place it must be understood that individualization and participation for Tillich are strictly and truly polar. In precisely the same sense that there can be no self without a world, and vice versa, neither can there be individualization without participation. In the second place, as Tillich wants them understood, individualization and participation are also, in the strictest sense, ontological elements. Emphasizing the ontic status of individualization he states,

"Individualization is not a characteristic of a special sphere of beings; it is an ontological element and therefore a quality of everything.

It is implied in and constitutive of every self, which means that at least in an analogous way it is implied in and constitutive of every being."¹

What is true here of individualization is, of course, also true of participation.

The crucial issue in these distinctions is Tillich's precision. For, while here and elsewhere he is generally extremely precise and very perceptive in the distinctions he draws, with respect to this polarity both his consistency and his perceptiveness leave something to be desired. Perhaps the inconsistency can best be illustrated by his use of the word participation. As Tillich first defines this it is strictly ontological and strictly polar. It is a "quality" of all being and not a "characteristic of any special sphere of beings." Despite this careful delineation however he goes on to illustrate participation by reference to the participation of a leaf "in the natural structures and forces which act upon it and which are acted upon by it."² While it is undoubtedly quite proper to speak of the participation of a leaf in natural structures and forces, this hardly seems to be the participation one would set over against individualization as an ontological quality of every being. What has occurred here is a confusion between the ontic definition, which is Tillich's

¹Ibid., Vol. I, p. 174.

²Ibid., p. 176.

basic intention, and a relational definition. In the ontic sense participation is an element in the being of a leaf quite apart from its specific relational participation in the realm of nature.

Why this equivocation should have occurred is open to question. However, in view of a further weakness in Tillich's thought concerning this polarity, a tentative explanation may become possible. In addition to his equivocal use of participation Tillich appears to have missed the distinction between individualization, as he carefully distinguishes it, and individuation, as it is commonly understood. That there is a distinction to be drawn here, and that he fails to appreciate the distinction is only occasionally clearly evident even though it may frequently be inferred.

In discussing the uniqueness of the person, Tillich states, "When individualization reaches the perfect form which we call 'person', participation reaches the perfect form which we call 'communion'."¹ He then qualifies this by saying that, while this is true for essential being, "Actually man's participation is always limited."² This qualification refers to the fact that since existential being is always estranged from essential being there will

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

always be a disharmony and an incompleteness within the polar elements of being regardless of which elements they might be. Therefore, both participation and individualization, and consequently both communion and personness are always incomplete in existence. The point to be noticed here is that individualization and participation are understood by Tillich as personness and communion. In this sense estrangement means the loss of personness and the loss of communion, while reconciliation means the perfection of unique personness and the perfection of communion.

These statements, of course, present no difficulties provided one remembers the strict sense in which Tillich uses the words individualization and participation. Even if one asks how a being limited in its individualization is to be understood, Tillich can refer, quite consistently, to his equation of individualization and personness and say, incomplete individualization is simply incomplete personness. It is when one asks in this context for the distinction between individualization and individuation that a serious problem arises. While it is possible, in Tillich's terms, to speak of incomplete individualization and mean by this incomplete personness, it is not possible to speak of incomplete individuation. Individuation refers to what might be called the simple horizontal distinction between one being and the next. It has to do with the simple differentiation between beings and not personness. Its opposite

would be homogenized being, not participation. That is to say, a stone is just as much a completely individuated being as a perfect person though for Tillich it would not be equally individualized.

Surprisingly, at no point does Tillich deal with individuation specifically. Even if the topic were not crucial to his thought one might expect him to at least mention it, if for no other reason than to avoid any weakening of his concept of individualization. Certainly the two terms cannot be used synonymously since, contrary to individualization, in existence individuation is always complete. Were this not so one could have no conception of beings as distinct entities. Moreover, the necessity for such a distinction seems strongly implied by the very fact that Tillich can speak of an incompletely individualized being. To be able to speak at all of an incompletely individualized being surely means having in mind the being of which one speaks. But one could have a particular being in mind only if it were completely individuated, i.e., a being distinct from other beings. Thus, while it seems clear that individualization, as Tillich defines it, and individuation, as it is commonly understood, function in quite different contexts, Tillich fails to make any mention of the distinction. Whether he felt the two should not be distinguished; whether he failed to notice the distinction, or whether he simply felt that, since he had defined individualization precisely and used it precisely, he

need not say anything more, is open to question. However, above and beyond the fact that his silence throws some doubt upon his awareness of the distinction, there are clear cases of outright error in his choice of the proper term. For example, he states, "Without individualization nothing would exist to be related."¹ Surely the proper term here would be individuation not individualization.

It was stated at the outset that the significance of this issue for estrangement lay in the fact that it left undecided the relationship between estrangement and independent beings. As Tillich sees estrangement, beings are separated from beings by estrangement. The question is whether he sees all separation between beings as the result of estrangement. If he does then both individualization and individuation must be regarded as evil. This being the case, reconciliation would have to mean not only the re-establishment of perfect personness and perfect communion, it would also have to mean the merging of all individuation in a total homogeneity. Such a conclusion would be quite out of keeping with the rest of Tillich's thought. But, on the other hand, if all separation between beings is not the consequence of estrangement; if in its individuatedness being is not suffering the effects of estrangement, then the implication is that essential

¹Ibid., p. 177.

being is itself individuated. This, however, is to raise the problem mentioned earlier in connection with creation. While Tillich's thought includes the creation of existential being it does not, and, he might add, it could not include the creation of essential being.

It has been stated that, for Tillich, the consequences of estrangement are ubiquitous. It might seem therefore, that to say individuation is not a consequence of estrangement, is to say that at least one feature of being is not touched by estrangement. This would be an error. For, while it seems likely that individuation, for Tillich, would not be considered evil as such, nevertheless, even the individuatedness of an existing being stands estranged from its individuated essence.

E. Freedom and Destiny.

In order to approach the concept of freedom-destiny it is necessary to make some reference to Tillich's understanding of the centeredness of man. The terms "self" and "world" have been discussed as constituting the basic level of ontological concepts. It must now be made explicit that Tillich's understanding of the term "self" is much more embracing than the psychological term "ego." The self is man's centeredness; that centeredness which unites and includes all elements of a man's being conscious and unconscious, rational and irrational, emotional and volitional, spiritual and material. Similarly, Tillich

understands the term "world" to be much more embracing than it ordinarily signifies. "The world is the structural whole which includes and transcends all environments."¹

Since the self is precisely man's centeredness it cannot be understood as divisible. It can be destroyed, but if it should be divided it becomes, not one self in several parts, but several new selves, each with its own centeredness. In the same sense the world cannot be divided since it is that totality which stands over against the self.

While Tillich describes how consciousness of self arises from contact with and establishment of a world, he makes no attempt to describe how the self, as such, arises. He simply states categorically, "The question is not whether selves exist. The question is whether we are aware of self-relatedness ... a self is not a thing that may or may not exist; it is an original phenomenon which logically precedes all questions of existence."²

Freedom, for Tillich, is the expression of man's centeredness. It is not a constitutive element in the self but the expression of the self in its centeredness. The danger of considering freedom as a "thing" or a quality in its own right is that one is thereby forced to enter the

¹Ibid., p. 70.

²Ibid., p. 169.

debate over the issue of freedom versus determinism. Tillich stands strongly against any attempt to juxtapose freedom and determinism. He implies that any such attempt would ultimately mean the destruction of necessity by freedom or the domination of freedom by necessity. Thus, indeterminism, the true opposite of determinism, cannot be equated with freedom. "Both determinism and indeterminism are theoretically impossible because by implication they deny their claim to express truth. Truth presupposes a decision for the true against the false. Both determinism and indeterminism make such a decision unintelligible."¹ Only freedom makes possible a decision "for the true against the false."

Tillich is equally opposed to a concept of freedom as a "function." He states, "One should speak of the freedom of 'man', indicating that every part and every function which constitutes man a personal self participates in his freedom."² It is here that the concept of freedom and the concept of self as centeredness, merge. As a centered being every aspect of a person at every level of his being is significant in so far as it contributes to, or supports the personal center. Man's freedom as the expression of this centeredness may thus be considered

¹Ibid., p. 183.

²Ibid.

rational, emotional, and volitional all at the same time; but only to the extent that these various aspects of man share in the structure of the personal center.

All that has been said to this point concerning freedom and centeredness has been directly relevant to man only with respect to his essential being. Essentially man is a totally centered being. That is to say, within the centeredness of essential man all the elements of being are harmoniously included. Thus man's freedom as the expression of his centeredness is fully effectual.

In existential man the situation is radically altered. The estrangement between man's existence and the ground of his being, together with the consequent estrangements within the various polarities of his being, all contribute to the fracturing of his centeredness. To the extent that this occurs, the effectiveness of freedom is lost and the self falls under the domination of determinism. Of this Tillich says, "It is possible to understand the determinacy of isolated parts in the light of the freedom of the whole - namely as a partial disintegration of the whole - but the converse is not possible."¹ Thus, while freedom in essential man is grounded in man's centeredness and expressed in singleness of purpose; freedom in existential man is grounded in man's fractured centeredness and is expressed in a self-destructive plurality of purposes.

¹Ibid., p. 84.

It is the grounding of freedom in the centeredness of the self that indicates the nature of destiny, freedom's polar opposite. "Our destiny is that out of which our decisions arise; it is the indefinitely broad basis of our centered selfhood; it is the concreteness of our being which makes all our decisions 'our' decisions."¹ This is not to say that destiny must be understood as determinative in the sense of "a strange power which determines what shall happen to me."² Rather, "It is myself as given, formed by nature, history, and myself. My destiny is the basis of my freedom; my freedom participates in shaping my destiny."³

In essential man, because of his complete centeredness, man's freedom and his destiny constitute an harmonious unit. In existence, however, freedom "ceases to relate itself to the objects provided by destiny."⁴ It becomes both indefinite and arbitrary. "To the degree to which freedom is distorted into arbitrariness, destiny is distorted into mechanical necessity."⁵

For Tillich then, the freedom which is no longer linked to its destiny becomes subject to motivations provided by other sources. These "foreign" sources of

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 185.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., Vol. II, p. 62f.

⁵Ibid., p. 63.

freedom's decisiveness indicate that the self as the determining center of action is being overpowered by elements of the self no longer embraced in its centeredness. As a result, "What seems to be free proves to be conditioned by internal compulsion and external causes."¹

The thoroughness of the incapacity wrought by estrangement in man may now be more fully appreciated. According to Tillich's analysis, regardless of what the act may be, every act of man's freedom to overcome the conditions of estrangement must be viewed as fundamentally questionable. That is to say, every expression of freedom by existential man ultimately lacks validity since true freedom is not to be found in him. Thus, even the attempt to overcome estrangement becomes nothing less than a bond taken on by some aspect of the self no longer embraced by man's total centeredness.

Tillich's conception of the effects of estrangement at the second level of ontological concepts is summed up by saying that freedom and destiny in estrangement move against each other in their distorted forms of arbitrariness and mechanical necessity; individualization and participation move against each other in their distorted forms of isolated subjectivity and de-personalized objectivity. Similarly any other polarity which might be found at this level will

¹Ibid.

also suffer self-destructive distortion as the inevitable consequence of estrangement and existence.

F. Finitude and Infinitude.

Of the third level of ontological concepts Tillich says,

here "the duality of essential and existential being is seen, and the question of their relation to one another and to being-itself is asked. The answer is prepared by the polarity of freedom and destiny on the second level of ontological analysis. However, freedom as such is not the basis of existence, but rather freedom in unity with finitude. ... Therefore, it is the analysis of finitude in its polarity with infinity as well as in its relation to freedom and destiny, to being and nonbeing, to essence and existence which is the task of ontology in the third level."¹

It will be recalled that, for Tillich, both essential and existential being are mixtures of being and nonbeing. That is, they both "stand in" and "stand out" of the ground of being. Precisely this limitation of being by nonbeing constitutes its finitude according to Tillich.² Except for "being-itself" which, he states, "is not a 'thing'" but the "beginning without a beginning, the end without an end ... the initial power of everything that is," - (That is to say, except for God,) - nonbeing "confronts that which 'is' with a definite end (finis)."³ In itself

¹Ibid., Vol. I, p. 165.

²Ibid., p. 189.

³Ibid.

this finitude is morally neutral; it is simply a quality of all being essential and existential.

While finitude and infinity are polar elements, as are the other constituents of the structures of being, Tillich points out that their relationship to each other is different. The difference can be accounted for by the fact that infinity can never be "given as an object. Infinity is a demand, not a thing."¹ That man, in spite of his finitude, or rather, because of it, also belongs to infinity is attested to by his freedom for infinite self-transcendence. The polar relationship existing between finitude and infinity consists in the fact that "All the structures of finitude force finite being to transcend itself and, just for this reason, to become aware of itself as finite."²

It is Tillich's argument that awareness of the fact of finitude is experienced in all elements at each level of ontological concept. Thus, contingency must be understood as the mark of finitude with respect to the self; ontological seclusion the mark of finitude with respect to individuality, and ontological ambiguity the mark of finitude with respect to vitality. In addition to these fundamental effects of finitude however, there are emotional

¹Ibid., p. 190.

²Ibid.

consequences which arise to the extent that the apprehension of finitude is interpreted as a threat. Thus, the threat of nonbeing implied by finitude leads to anxiety in the self; the threat of ontological seclusion implied by finitude leads to ontological loneliness in individuality, and the threat of ontological ambiguity leads to ontological embarrassment in vitality.

One could continue this description of the effect of finitude to include every polarity manifest in being. However, the point to be grasped is that in each case the result is a state of tension tending to call man's freedom into action. The consequence of such an action has already been described in connection with the dynamics involved in the transition from essence to existence. There, freedom was pictured as under the duress of a dual anxiety: anxiety over the fact of finitude's vulnerability and anxiety in the face of its responsibility for a potential infinity.

While one might be inclined to assume that man's anxiety in relation to his finitude is another result of estrangement, this would be entirely erroneous. By pointing out that infinity cannot be "given as an object" even to essential being, Tillich not only indicates a difference between this polarity and all others, he indicates that, by this characteristic, all being, existential and essential, is ultimately forced to point beyond itself

to the "ground and abyss" of being. Thus, while the anxiety created by the tension between finitude and infinity is not the result of estrangement but rather the pre-condition for it, one would not be justified in understanding this as an advance toward or as an opening into a reconciliation. While finitude and infinity are not existentially estranged in the manner of the other polarities neither are they either existentially or essentially reconciled. Finitude could only be reconciled with infinity if it were able to reach beyond being to the ground of being itself.

The fourth level of ontological concepts has little direct bearing on the question of estrangement except, that as participants in the nature of finitude, the constitutive categories heighten the sense of anxiety in being.

This level, Tillich states;

"deals with those concepts which traditionally have been called categories, that is the basic forms of thought and being. They participate in the nature of finitude and can be called structures of finite being and thinking. To determine their number and organization is one of the infinite tasks of philosophy."¹

G. Conclusion.

According to Tillich's analysis then, the effects of estrangement within the structures of being are all

¹Ibid., p. 165.

encompassing and completely disabling as far as man's efforts toward reconciliation are concerned. While one might question some aspects of his analysis, with respect to the nature and the extent of estrangement as such, his argument seems quite convincing.

The basic features of Tillich's understanding of estrangement and being may now be gathered together. In every aspect, and at every level being is polar in structure. Since the consequence of estrangement is a self-destructive separation within and between all the polarities of being, there is no aspect of being left untouched by estrangement. However, while there cannot be existence without the dynamics of self-destruction, this self-destruction can never be carried to completion. That is to say, for Tillich, the possibility of self-destruction is predicated upon the fact of existence. Consequently, the more intense self-destruction becomes the more existence is affirmed. Under the estranging conditions of existence, being is therefore suspended somewhere between a complete reconciliation and total destruction, with no possibility of moving all the way in either direction. In estrangement being is forced to seek reconciliation, but precisely because of the estrangement, reconciliation is inconceivable. Beyond the realization of this dilemma the search for reconciliation in being cannot go.

CHAPTER III

ESTRANGEMENT IN REASON

A. Introduction.

Of all the sections in Tillich's Systematic Theology "Reason and the Quest for Revelation"¹ is the most obscure, ambiguous, and inadequately substantiated. With respect to these inadequacies it is significant to note that Tillich's procedure is to treat epistemology prior to ontology even though "Epistemology is a part of ontology"² and is, thus, less basic. The methodological advantage to such a procedure is made clear by Tillich's understanding of reason as the "tool" of ontology. Without an understanding of the nature and limitations of the tools one uses, anything the tools accomplish is open to considerable question. But to treat reason as an ontological reality without first making clear the structures of being to which the structures of reason correspond, necessarily introduces a considerable risk of obscurity and misunderstanding. It also necessarily leaves both the discussion and the epistemology, as such, incomplete. This incompleteness has prompted Dorothy M. Emmet to state,

"What is needed ... is a fuller discussion on how far what Tillich calls the concepts of the ontological reason are prescriptive

¹Ibid., pp. 71-105.

²Ibid., p. 71

and how far they are descriptive; that is to say, how far they are the intellectual apparatus in terms of which we organize our ways of talking about the world, and how far they are descriptive of discoveries about the world (as an objective environment and not only an organized whole of thought); and if they are discoveries how are these discoveries made and tested? This is the central problem of epistemology; and because rather than discuss it he tends to make assertions, appealing to what he calls the 'classical tradition from Parmenides to Hegel', I feel Tillich never quite comes to grips with it, though he is continually moving round it."¹

B. Two Concepts of Reason.

For Tillich the contemporary understanding of reason as a purely technical tool, while not wrong, must be supplemented by the classical concept of ontological reason. Viewed as an ontological reality reason is the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and to transform reality. In this sense not only is reason cognitive, "it is cognitive and aesthetic, theoretical and practical, detached and passionate, subjective and objective."² As against this, in modern times, technical reason has been reduced in meaning to the mere capacity for reasoning; it includes "Only those cognitive acts which deal with the discovery of means for ends."³

¹Chas. W. Kegley and Robt. W. Bretall, (eds.), The Theology of Paul Tillich (New York: Macmillan, 1952), p. 208.

²Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 72.

³Ibid., p. 73.

C. Subjective and Objective Reason.

Having distinguished between reason and reasoning, Tillich goes on in his Systematic Theology to distinguish between objective reason and subjective reason. The distinction he makes at this point is directly related to his understanding of the basic subject-object structure of reality. The ability of reason to "grasp and shape" reality, he says, has been explained traditionally on the assumption that "the Logos, the word which grasps and shapes reality, can do so only because reality itself has a logos character."¹ This must be true, according to Tillich, regardless of which function in ontological reason is being considered. Thus, he states, "Subjective reason is the structure of the mind which enables it to grasp and shape reality on the basis of a corresponding structure of reality ... while objective reason is the rational structure of reality which the mind can grasp and according to which it can shape reality."² This distinction between the grasping and shaping functions of reason, however, cannot be understood as absolute. That is to say, while the functions are distinguishable they are not separable. They must be understood as two elements of a single polarity with degrees of the one always present in the functioning of the other.

¹Ibid., p. 75.

²Ibid., p. 77.

D. The Relationship Between Epistemology and Ontology.

It will be apparent from this that precisely the same concept of polarity which characterized the structures of being, for Tillich, also characterizes the structures of reason. The basis for this correspondence lies in Tillich's understanding of reason as one of the beings in the totality of being. Whatever can be said about beings in general can also be said about the being of reason. Thus, just as there is a subject-object polarity in being so there must be a subject-object polarity in reason. In this way, Tillich's epistemology is grounded in his ontology. That is to say, the movement of correspondence is from being to reason and not the reverse. Unfortunately, Tillich is not always able to make the direction of this movement convincingly clear. The result is that one is left in doubt as to the precise aspects of being to which certain features of his epistemology are supposed to correspond. For example, Tillich states, "Like being itself, reason unites a dynamic with a static element in an indissoluble amalgamation."¹ Superficially the direction of correspondence here is from being to reason. However, as Tillich enlarges upon the topic it becomes apparent that the reverse is in fact true. For the problem which engages his attention is not the significance of the ontological for the epistemological,

¹Ibid., p. 78.

rather he discusses the implication for ontology of the epistemological assertion that objective reason has a dynamic element.¹ If, as he argues, there is in fact a dynamic element within the structure of mind as an aspect of being, then the question must be raised: to what extent is it valid to speak of a "changing element within the structure of reality"?² A very brief consideration of this leads him to state, "Neither nature nor history can create anything that contradicts reason. The new and the old in history and nature are bound together in an overwhelming rational unity which is static and dynamic at the same time. The new does not break this unity; it cannot because objective reason is the structural possibility, the logos of being."³ Thus, the correspondence between reason and being stands revealed. But, it is a correspondence arrived at from the wrong direction. Instead of letting his point of departure be being, for this particular polarity Tillich lets his point of departure be reason. Since the correspondence does, in fact, emerge, the error at this point is not serious. Nevertheless, the error is indicative of Tillich's willingness to proceed with his analysis of reason in separation from his analysis of being. In doing this, the risk he takes is that of ending up with an epistemology which cannot correspond to his ontology.

¹Ibid., p. 78.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 79

E. Further Polarities Within Reason.

Perhaps the most obscure and underdeveloped aspect of Tillich's analysis occurs in connection with his statement "In both types of rational acts, the grasping and the shaping, a basic polarity is visible."¹ Just how and why these polarities become visible is difficult to discern. To be sure, Tillich does say it is "due to the fact that an emotional element is present in every rational act"² that the grasping and shaping functions of reason have an internal polarity. But this explanation is neither sufficiently developed nor sufficiently convincing to dispell a strong impression of arbitrariness.

To give him the benefit of the doubt; it is quite possible that the factor of emotion does make such a structuring necessary. However, apart from a very casual and, at best, occasional passing reference to the nature of emotion, at no point does Tillich make clear just how emotion relates to the rest of his theological system. It is to be hoped that with the publishing of the third volume of his Systematic Theology containing a section on life, the aspect of emotion in reality will be more decisively incorporated into the body of his thought.

¹Ibid., p. 77.

²Ibid.

However, while there may be considerable doubt as to the route Tillich follows, the conclusion he wishes to reach is clear. "On the receptive side of reason we find a polarity between the cognitive and the aesthetic elements. On the reactive side of reason we find a polarity between the organizational and the organic elements."¹ Moreover, "Each of the four functions ... includes transitional stages on the path to its opposite pole."² For the purpose of this study, the important point is Tillich's consistent use of the concept of polarity. For, in reason as in being the effect of estrangement is a disruption in polar relationships.

F. The Depth of Reason

In contrast to some aspects of his analysis of reason Tillich's short discussion of the "depths of reason" is extremely perceptive and lucid. "The depth of reason is the expression of something that is not reason but which precedes reason and is manifest through it."³ It is Tillich's contention that "Reason in both its objective and its subjective structures points to something which appears in these structures but which transcends them in power and meaning."⁴ He is at a loss to identify this

¹Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 79.

²Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

aspect of reason by a name since the very assigning of a name would imply its existence as a feature of reason. Rather, the depth of reason is that which "precedes" reason, the "substance," the "being-itself," the "ground," the "abyss," the "infinite potentiality of being and meaning" in reason. Tillich comes closest to making this concept tangible when he points out that "In the cognitive realm the depth of reason is its quality of pointing to truth-itself."¹ Similarly, in the aesthetic realm the depth of reason is that which points to a "beauty-itself." In the legal realm it is that which points to a "justice-itself," and in the communal realm it is that which points to a "love-itself." Understood in this way, it is the dimension of depth which makes all rational functions "inexhaustible" and gives them "greatness."²

G. Reason In Existence.

Up to this point Tillich's analysis has been considered only in so far as it relates to reason in its essence. However, "Reason as the structure of mind and reality is actual in the process of being, existence, and life."³ Therefore, as he points out, "Actual reason moves through finite categories, through self-destructive conflicts,

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 80.

³Ibid., p. 81.

through ambiguities, and through the quest for what is unambiguous, beyond conflict, and beyond bondage to the categories."¹ In other words the effect of the basic estrangement between essence and existence is fully reflected within the structures of existential reason.

In considering the effect of estrangement on reason, it should be kept in mind that while Tillich speaks of actual reason as finite and ambiguous, finitude, for him, is not a consequence of estrangement. Thus, "The finitude of reason does not lie in the fact that it lacks perfection in grasping and shaping reality ... Finitude is essential for reason."²

As in being, the disastrous consequences of estrangement in reason result from the fact that the elements of all the polar structures separate and move destructively against each other. Not, however, to the extent that the basic structures themselves ever become completely lost. Rather, "In the actual life of reason essential and existential forces, forces of creation and forces of destruction, are united and disunited at the same time."³ The polar elements of structure and depth separate and contradict each other in their existentially distorted forms of autonomy and heteronomy. The polarity of static

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 83.

and dynamic elements separate and contradict each other in their distorted forms of absolutism and relativism. And the polarity of formal and emotional elements separate and contradict each other in their distorted forms of formalism and emotionalism. In each of these cases that which prevents the total destruction of the one element by the other lies in the nature of the elements as polarities. That is to say, the stronger the validation of the one element, the stronger the validation of the other by reason of their polar interdependence.

While the cognitive function of reason receives special consideration by Tillich since it is in terms of cognition that revelation becomes relevant, here too a polarity becomes manifest and suffers existential separation and self-contradiction. Tillich justifies his understanding of the polar structure of cognition by pointing out that "Knowing is a form of union."¹ while at the same time "Detachment is the condition of cognitive union."² Thus, "The unity of distance and union is the ontological problem of cognition."³ Essentially the polarity of union and separation is a harmonious relationship of "understanding." Existentially the elements of the polarity

¹Ibid., p. 94.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

separate as "controlling knowledge" which demands detached objectification as the pathway to truth; and "receiving knowledge" which demands mystical participation as the pathway to truth. Neither pathway can be completed since "controlling knowledge is safe but not ultimately significant, while receiving knowledge can be ultimately significant, but it cannot give certainty."¹

Just as in being, the effect of estrangement on reason is to leave it unhappily suspended somewhere between a complete self-negation and an impossible reconciliation. Because of estrangement it is imperative for reason to seek truth. But also because of estrangement the truth is impossible to find. To find truth reason would need truth, but just this is what it does not have. In the grip of this dilemma reason ultimately finds itself forced to yield "either to a desperate resignation of truth or to the quest for revelation."²

¹Ibid., p. 105.

²Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

ESTRANGEMENT IN LIFE

A. Introduction.

The problem of estrangement has now been considered in relation to the separation of existence from essence, in relation to the separations within the polar structures of being as such, and in relation to the separations within the polar characteristics of reason. While estrangement in each of these respects is relevant to man to the extent that man is an actuality in estrangement from his potentiality, that in his being all the structures of being are present, and that in him the structures of reason are made manifest, there remains an area of estrangement crucial to man which has not yet been discussed. One may say that, up to this point Tillich's thought deals with man only to the extent that man is a being; it does not deal with man to the extent that he is an individual life within a community of other individual lives.

Unfortunately the section of Tillich's Systematic Theology dealing with man in these terms has not yet been published. Nevertheless, one can gain a fairly clear understanding of his thoughts in this respect as the result of a summary statement of the propositions to be dealt with in the forthcoming volume which has made available for the private use of his students. It is this statement of

propositions which shall be the primary source for the following chapter.

B. Life as Actuality.

Life, according to Tillich, cannot be understood as essential being since "Life is the actuality of Being."¹ Like existential being, which is included in it, life is dependent upon the structures and the power of essential being, though it is not to be equated with them. On the other hand, life is to be distinguished from existential being in that life is the "interpenetration of essential and existential being."² Thus, while life is based on essential being it betrays all "the contradictions of Existence and the gap between Essential and Existential Being."³

The paucity and brevity of Tillich's remarks concerning the distinction between life and existential being leave much to be desired. However, his remark, "life implies a movement of separation from itself and of return to itself"⁴ seems to indicate that while life would evidence both movements, existential being could only demonstrate the movement of separation.

¹Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology. The Complete Preliminary Draft, Issued for the Private Use of Tillich's Students: Fourth Part, p. 1.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

The concept of polarity also permeates Tillich's understanding of life. He argues that the continuous separation of the elements of essential being implied in life drives life toward "self-destructive isolation" while the continuous reunion of these elements drives it toward "undifferentiated unity." Thus, were life to be other than a polar balance between these two movements it could not exist since the former movement carried to its conclusion would mean the loss of life in death, while the latter movement carried to its conclusion would mean the loss of life in mystical identity.¹

C. Characteristics of Life in Particular and in General.

For Tillich, there are four characteristics of life in general and five of life in particular. The characteristics of life in general point to life's tendency to actualize the potentialities defined by its destiny; to maintain a balance between the dialectical elements of separation and unity; to transform its elements by reference to broader meanings; and to transcend itself for the sake of more life.

¹"Life as the actuality of Being is the continuous separation of the elements of the Essential structure of Being up to the limit of self-destructive isolation. Life as the actuality of Being is the continuous reunion of the elements of the Essential structure of Being up to the limit of undifferentiated unity. The trespassing of the first limit is death, the trespassing of the second limit is identity." Ibid.

Self-centeredness, the first characteristic of individual life, i.e., life in particular, points to the fact that "In every individual life a center is posited which unites the elements of the life-process and separates the individual life from its environment."¹ This characteristic leads directly to the second; spontaneity. Spontaneity means, for Tillich, that "In every individual life the response to a stimulus from outside originates in the totality of its life process."² The third characteristic; self-preservation, signifies the tendency of life to "maintain itself a [sic] receptive and reactive interaction with its surroundings."³ The fourth characteristic; self-extension, indicates the characteristic of growth. The fifth; self-subjection, points to the tendency of life to belong to "more comprehensive" life processes.

D. Four Levels of Life.

In addition to the distinction between life in general and life in particular Tillich also distinguishes four "levels" of life. This he does on the basis of what he considers to be four distinct levels or "forms of spontaneity." Thus, the "inorganic," the "vegetative," the "animal," and

¹Ibid., p. 2.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

the "human" levels of life correspond to the different "forms of spontaneity," the highest of which is freedom.

It is at this point that his analysis becomes directly relevant to the topic of estrangement. For, it is at the highest level of life, the "human level," the level where "spontaneity is freedom or the appearance of the infinite expressed in man's spiritual character"¹ that both the "fulfilment and the danger of life" become real possibilities. According to Tillich it must be clearly understood that estrangement is a possibility at the human level of life, and only at the human level, not because the human level is any more or less perfect, but because only at this level is spontaneity present as true freedom.²

It is important to note that the term "spiritual life," as used by Tillich, does not denote some level of life higher than the human. Rather, it is used as a synonym for human life. Spiritual life must, therefore, be distinguished from both essential and existential being just as was life itself. "It is inadequate to call the realm of Essential Being spiritual. Spirit is a character

¹Ibid., p. 3.

²It will be recalled that, for Tillich, one of the two preconditions of the "fall" or estrangement is freedom.

of life, uniting Essential and Existential elements."¹;
it is "the unity of power and mind."²

Tillich's distinction of levels of life based on forms of spontaneity and his understanding of freedom as the highest form of spontaneity, must be regarded as one of the most far reaching aspects of his thought. For, by this conception man is saved from being reduced to the realm of pure nature on the one hand, and from being entirely dissociated from it on the other. Moreover, by insisting on a continuum of spontaneity which embraces both inanimate life and spiritual freedom Tillich avoids both a nature-spirit dualism and a simple monism. While one might object that an interpretation of nature based entirely on a concept of spontaneity constitutes a monistic position, Tillich points out, quite consistently, that "Spirit is neither the mere expression of a given nature nor the participation in a transcendent realm of ideas or values, but it is the creative synthesis of a given vital and individual nature with an intentional and universal meaning."³ That is to say, while spontaneity certainly does embrace all that is natural about man, as freedom it not only "embraces," it also "transcends."

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 4.

"Spiritual creativity is neither the expression nor the affirmation of its natural basis but it is the break with it and the fulfilment of it at the same time."¹ Thus, to the extent that one must speak of estrangement in man, one must also speak of estrangement in nature and vice versa. The difference between man and nature at this point is that only in man as a "break" with nature is the act of estrangement a possibility.

E. Perfection and Fulfilment in the Light of Estrangement.

The break with natural perfection implied by spontaneity understood as freedom makes possible for Tillich a point of contact between his concepts of perfection and fulfilment, and the dynamics of estrangement. For Tillich, perfection is understood simply as the innocence of essential being; fulfilment, on the other hand is understood as the actualization of essential potentialities. The only way for perfection to reach fulfilment is through the highest form of spontaneity, man's freedom. But, to actualize essential potentialities is to lose natural perfection, while to lose perfection is to make fulfilment impossible. Thus, on the only level at which spontaneity might bring about a fulfilment of perfection, a dilemma is encountered from which there can be no satisfactory escape. On the one hand innocence can be retained, but

¹Ibid.

only by forsaking the hope of fulfilment. On the other, fulfilment may be attempted, but this means not only a loss of innocence, it means in addition the full consequences of estrangement. The fact that life is located somewhere between a lost perfection and an expected fulfilment decisively indicates that man has taken his choice and estrangement is a fact.

It is against this background that Tillich is able to say, "Spiritual life is the fulfilment and the danger of Life; it is the actualization of the potentialities implied in the structure of Essential Being under the conditions of Existence."¹ That is to say, the potentialities actualized by life are truly essential potentialities and, to this extent fulfilments. But since life is existential, every potentiality actualized must suffer the effects of estrangement, and in this lies the danger.

F. Personal and Social Life.

It is axiomatic for Tillich that there is "an unconditional demand implied in every personality to be acknowledged as personality."² It follows from this that "The rise of personal and social life is interdependent."³ Moreover, "Only the complete 'personalization'

¹Ibid., p. 3.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³Ibid.

of the individual makes the complete 'socialization' of the group possible."¹ This interdependence of personalization and socialization provides Tillich with a model for understanding the relationship between habits and institutions. "Habits in the individual and institutions in the group ... are the result of former spiritual experiences and decisions."² Not only does man have a given nature as man, as life, and as societies, he also has a "second nature"³ i.e., habit and institution, which, in turn, is fulfilled and transcended by his spiritual life.

G. Life as Reception and Reaction.

Functionally, for Tillich, one of the fundamental characteristics of life at all levels is the "double movement" of reception and reaction. On the one hand, the world impresses itself upon the individual life and on the other, the individual life impresses itself upon the world. This double movement Tillich takes to be characteristic of all functions of life. The receptive movement he calls the theoretical function, the reactive movement the practical function. As functions, both the theoretical and practical spheres of life have appropriate "fulfilments."

¹Ibid.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

The fulfilment of the theoretical function is the "true" while the fulfilment of the practical function is the "good." The actualization of these fulfilments through the functioning of life is dependent upon two conditions which, according to Tillich, reflect the fundamental subject-object structure of being. "The reception of the world and its contents by the self is true (and) the reaction to the world and its contents is good if it agrees with the general structure of being and of every part of it on the one hand, and if it fulfills the creative potentialities of the receiving (or reacting) self on the other hand."¹

H. The Goal of Life.

For both of these functions the fundamental goal is the "Essential unity of the finite life with its infinite ground."² Indeed for Tillich, in every spiritual act it is the realization of this unity under the conditions of existence that is intended.³ This intention of unity between the finite life and its infinite ground, "is the 'religious' character of man's spiritual life."⁴ It is in this fundamentally religious context that Tillich

¹Ibid., p. 6.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

defines love. "The uniting power is 'Love' ... Love as the separating and reuniting power of life is able to create the new in all spiritual realms without destroying the eternal forms of being. And it is able to fulfill the subjective self without destroying the objective structures of things."¹

It is interesting to note that, by the terms of this definition, Tillich seems to devalue love as the ultimate goal of life and make it instead, the preliminary power, by which the true ultimate, namely the "unity of the finite life with its infinite ground," is achieved. That Tillich does, in fact, regard this unity as the ultimate objective for life is made explicit in his statement, "Man's connection with his infinite ground is his absolute or ultimate concern, transcending all his relative and preliminary concerns, giving limits and meaning to them at the same time."² The conclusion Tillich draws from this is that, therefore, "every act of ... life should be intrinsically religious and ... there should not be a special religious function."³ Thus, "There is no essential but only an existential difference between religion and culture."⁴

¹Ibid., p. 7

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

I. The Ambiguity of Life in Existence.

The fact that life inevitably suffers the consequences of estrangement has already been mentioned. The form in which this estrangement becomes manifest, according to Tillich, is total "ambiguity."¹ That ambiguity should be the mark of estrangement in life, is based on the fact that there is no essential life. Life, to be life, is always an actuality. It is always a mixture of both essential being and existential being. Thus, one cannot speak of the occurrence of a separation within the polarities of life such as occurs in being and reason. One cannot speak of estrangement as even "happening" to life since life, as given, already embodies estrangement. But, as a "given estrangement" life implies both that which is estranged (existential being) and that from which estrangement has occurred (essential being). As a result, life always manifests a dual character, and in this lies its ambiguity. Life is not only creative but also destructive, not only total but also fragmentary, not only great but also tragic, and not only holy but also demonic.² Stated in more general terms: as a result of estrangement precisely those conditions which make possible the positive elements in life also make possible the negative.

¹Ibid., p. 8.

²Ibid., p. 8f.

One should not misunderstand the relationship existing between the positive and negative aspects of life. Tillich's argument is not that they exist independently from each other. Rather, they "interpenetrate each other in such a way that no special life process belongs unambiguously to the one or the other."¹ Thus, sexual love is "The highest form of the unity of the creativeness and destructiveness of life"; sacrifice - the loss of the possible for the sake of the actual, or vice versa - is "The highest form of the unity of the total and the fragmentary character of life"; heroism - the acceptance of the self-destructive implications of greatness - is "The highest form of the unity of the greatness and the tragedy of life"; and saintliness - "the religious attempt to overcome the ambiguities of life by a perfect surrender to the ground of being" - is "The highest form of the unity of holiness and demonization of life."²

The tension between the contradictory meanings implied by a true ambiguity ultimately drives life into a search beyond itself. Life, according to Tillich, is driven into a quest "for life beyond ambiguity ... a life in which the destructive, fragmentary, tragic, and demonic

¹Ibid., p. 8.

²Ibid., pp. 8-10.

implications of the creativity, totality, greatness, and holiness of life are overcome."¹ In morality, culture, and religion, the ambiguity in life drives man to seek a "transmoral morality," a "transcultural culture," and a "transreligious religion." Indeed, at its broadest extent, ambiguity drives spiritual life into a quest for Eternal Life and a quest for the Divine Spirit.² However, while Tillich understands one of the consequences of estrangement in life to be a quest for a solution from beyond life, no less a consequence is man's inability to reach such a solution. Life's quest must necessarily remain a mere quest since both quest and inability lie in the nature of life itself.

As in every other aspect of reality, so too in life, the final effect of estrangement is the creation of a situation at once intolerable and insoluble. Ultimately neither a valid hope nor a complete despair are possible for man. Man can no more deny his life than he can perfect it. Since he has it he must attempt a solution to it, but since at all points it is ambiguous every solution is itself a problem.

¹Ibid., p. 10.

²Ibid., p. 13.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A. The Consequences of Estrangement.

For Tillich the source of every disruption and every destructive tendency throughout the whole of reality is the fundamental estrangement brought about by the transition of being from potentiality to actuality. "The state of existence is the state of estrangement. Man is estranged from the ground of his being, from other beings, and from himself."¹ This state is both "fact" and "act"² and embraces both moral and tragic elements.³ "The transition from essence to existence results in personal guilt and universal tragedy."⁴ The personal guilt, or sin, of estrangement appears in man as "unbelief," "hubris," and "concupiscence." The universal tragedy appears as the consequent estrangement arising within and between all the structures and levels of reality; as the self-destructive tendencies of the estranged structures and levels, and as the impotence of existence in terms of the problem of reconciliation.

¹Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p. 44.

²Ibid., p. 55ff.

³Ibid., p. 36ff.

⁴Ibid., p. 45.

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B. The Depth of Estrangement

Tillich has spoken of the "ground of being," the "depth of reason," and the "spirituality of life," and by these phrases has indicated the dimension of profundity which is implied, but is never made manifest, by that which is merely "apparent" about being, reason, and life. In somewhat the same manner it would also seem legitimate to speak of a dimension of profundity in estrangement. That is to say, the superficial implication of estrangement is simple separation. For Tillich however, the much more profound implication of estrangement is unity.

Estrangement is a relational term. Consequently, no matter how great the gulf that exists between "the estranged," that which is estranged and that from which estrangement has taken place will always be bound together by their very relationship of estrangement. Actually, this characteristic of estrangement may be regarded as the "sine qua non" of Tillich's method of correlation. As Will Herberg states, "Tillich's dialectic is a 'conjunctive' dialectic in which diversity is seen as forever being taken up in a larger unity."¹ In this sense the appropriateness of estrangement as descriptive of existence lies in its

¹Will Herberg, Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich: Two Ways in American Protestant Theology, The Chaplain, (Oct., 1959).

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power to affirm both the separation and the "larger unity" essential to such a dialectic.

Again and again Tillich's analysis of estrangement illustrates this double quality of separation and union. One may recall that it is only by "standing in" the ground of being that existence is able to "stand out" into estrangement. That is to say, for Tillich existence is truly estranged from essence, but it is only able to maintain such a relationship by virtue of the fact that it continues, nevertheless, grounded in the power of that from which it is estranged. Similarly with reason and life: reason in existence is able to be self-contradictory only by virtue of the fact that it remains nevertheless grounded in the universal logos from which it is estranged. And life is able to be totally ambiguous only by virtue of the fact that its spiritual freedom retains the potency of that from which it is estranged.

It was stated at the beginning that Tillich did not wish his analysis of reality to be prejudiced by insights gained from a stance within the circle of faith. Philosophy and theology can inform one another, but they must not be mixed. Since Tillich speaks both as a philosopher and as a theologian, it is highly important to take this distinction seriously. Any confusion at this point would be to reduce his thought to nonsense on the one hand, and to miss the whole point of his methodology on the other.

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At every point Tillich's analysis of estrangement in reality is consciously philosophical. As a result, all the conclusions he reaches are defensible on philosophical grounds or they are not defensible at all. That existence is estrangement, that in estrangement man is forced to seek reconciliation, and that reconciliation is beyond man's reach, are conclusions which, however unpalatable to the secular world, can only be attacked by another analysis which would have to be at least as consistent and comprehensive as that provided by Tillich. The vindication of Tillich's conclusions concerning estrangement rests, therefore, upon the integrity of his analysis of existence as a philosophical analysis.

Tillich's distinction between the philosophical and the theological enterprises becomes even more crucial when, in spite of his philosophical conclusions, he asserts that, not only is reconciliation a possibility, it is an actuality. Here, Tillich's conviction is not a conclusion based on philosophical speculation, rather, it is a religious proclamation. Nevertheless, religious proclamations, according to Tillich, are not entirely dissociated from philosophy. For, while philosophy cannot speculate to religious conclusions, philosophy can and must affirm the logical possibility of religious realities. What must be kept clearly in mind by both philosophical

and theological apologetics is that from logical possibilities existential actualities do not necessarily follow.

One may regard as the ultimate consequence of estrangement the raising of the question of reconciliation. While no answer to this question may be created or expected, it is Tillich's argument that the question itself does serve to point to the reality of such an answer. He states, "The paradoxes of 'transmoral morality', 'transcultural culture', and 'transreligious religion' point to the presence of the Divine Spirit within the spiritual life and Life Universal; they point to the actuality of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ."¹ It should be noted that when Tillich speaks of the question pointing to the answer he does not mean this in the sense of a speculative pointing. The answer does not emerge as a logical conclusion. On the contrary, the answer is one that can only appear to speculation as a paradox. Throughout the whole of being, reason, and life there is neither basis, program, nor power sufficient for the accomplishment of a reconciliation since no level and no feature of existential reality is exempt from the problem of estrangement. Thus, the question of estrangement points to the actuality of reconciliation in the sense that only in the existence of a new kind of being, the "New Being," could

¹Tillich, Preliminary Draft, Fourth Part, p. 13.

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an adequate answer be given. Such an answer would have to appear as both unexpected and paradoxical since no amount of speculation could either anticipate it, affirm it, or deny it. Moreover, it would have to appear as a gift since no effort of existence could do anything toward its creation. The limit of philosophical effectiveness in the problem of estrangement is therefore, the evocation of an attitude of utter dependency upon that which stands beyond existence.

PART II
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

For Tillich, reconciliation and estrangement are correlates. As such, they are neither directly related to one another nor totally separated from one another. They exist in relation, but only in the sense that a question is related to an answer. The existence of the question begs but cannot create the existence of its answer. In the same way estrangement can indicate reconciliation but it cannot imply its existence. This concept of correlation saves Tillich from two pitfalls. On the one hand it avoids the error of liberal idealism which fails to accept fully the discontinuity in being implied by estrangement. On the other hand it avoids the error of Protestant neo-orthodoxy which fails to accept the continuity in being which is also implied by estrangement. That is to say, the destructive consequences of estrangement are all-pervasive and should not be underestimated. But on the other hand, since the structures of being are polar, a total destruction of being by being is impossible.

Two consequences follow from the correlative nature of estrangement and reconciliation. On the one hand,

because of the discontinuity implied estrangement must despair of ever reconciling itself. On the other, because of the continuity implied, reconciliation, if and when it does appear must have both a nature and a form relevant to the nature and form of that which is estranged. This means that, since existence, in spite of estrangement, remains rooted in the ground of being and embodies the structures of being, reconciliation must necessarily affirm existential being while at the same time overcoming estrangement. Reconciliation must both fulfill and transcend estranged existence. According to Tillich, this means that reconciliation must inevitably be paradoxical. To be valid as the correlate of estrangement reconciliation must necessarily appear as an existence not overcome by the conditions of existence.

It must be clearly understood that, for Tillich, man's basic need is neither a return to essential "dreaming innocence" nor freedom from the demands of an unachievable essential destiny. Neither Plato's return to "ideal forms" nor existentialism's preoccupation with pure existence can serve as a basis for a valid concept of perfection. To be valid, according to Tillich, a concept of perfect life must do full justice to both the essential and the existential characteristics of life. This means, of course, that reconciliation and perfection

become one in their implication of a paradoxical existence not overcome by the conditions of existence.

Tillich's statement that "in one personal life essential manhood has appeared under the conditions of existence without being conquered by them"¹ must be understood not as the conclusion of a philosopher but as the proclamation of a theologian. As already stated theological proclamations cannot be direct conclusions of philosophical questions. On the other hand, neither can theological proclamations be completely discontinuous with philosophical questions.² Here too, the relationship is correlative. To be sure the question is determinative for the form the answer may take but the answer itself must be a "given." Thus, it is only as one who has been "given" the answer, not as one who has "concluded" it that Tillich may say, "The appearance of the New Being under the conditions of existence, yet judging and conquering them, is the paradox of the Christian message. This is the only paradox and the source of all paradoxical statements in Christianity."³

While the existential basis for theological assertions such as this cannot be supported or denied on

¹Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p. 94.

²Ibid., Vol. I, p. 26.

³Ibid., Vol. II, p. 92.

philosophical grounds, this does not mean, for Tillich, that theological assertions may therefore be philosophically irresponsible. The mode of man's encounter with reconciliation must be philosophically intelligible even though this intelligibility can be no guarantee of its occurrence. Thus, the philosophical problem posed by reconciliation is not the fact of its occurrence but the intelligibility of its mode of occurrence. If the mode of encounter between reconciliation and estrangement cannot be made intelligible to man in his estrangement then reconciliation will appear as something alien and opaque precisely at the point where relevance and meaning are most required.

For Tillich, the manner in which reconciliation occurs can be made intelligible. This intelligibility rests upon a clear understanding of the goal that reconciliation implies, and upon an understanding of the structure within which this must take place. For Tillich, the goal implied by reconciliation is the "Essential unity of the finite life with its infinite ground."¹ The structure, in terms of which this must occur is the subject-object character of being. It is Tillich's belief, indeed, his grateful certainty as a Christian, that a transcendence of the basic subject-object split in reality can be effected in terms of either element

¹Tillich, Preliminary Draft, Fourth Part, p. 6.

of the polarity. From the objective side religious symbols have the power to grasp the individual with the power of being itself. From the subjective side, "ultimate concern," or faith, in that which is truly ultimate can reunite the individual with the ground of his being. In both cases the subject-object structure of being is transcended, with the result that the objectivity implied by reconciliation as an answer, and the subjectivity implied by estrangement as a question is overcome, and question and answer become one.

CHAPTER II

SUBJECT-OBJECT TRANSCENDENCE

A. Ultimate Concern.

Tillich's concepts of "ultimate concern" and symbol must be considered in greater detail. For Tillich, the New Being which is given in Jesus as the Christ may become the reconciling New Being for estranged existential man on the basis of man's participation in it. The relationship which establishes this participation is faith, or to use the philosophical counterpart of the religious term, "ultimate concern."

According to Tillich, everyone is ultimately concerned about something. Man's ultimate concern is his concern for that which he takes to be the source of his life's ultimate validity and meaning. In this capacity man's ultimate concern will stand before him as both demand and promise; "total surrender" being demanded and "total fulfilment" being promised.

Ultimate concern is also man's most centered act of freedom. In this sense the content of ultimate concern is of "infinite" importance, since it is not just reason that is at stake, nor will, nor emotion. Rather man's total being depends on the content of his concern.

Tillich's choice of the phrase "ultimate concern" has the deliberate intent of allowing reference both to

the subjective act of concern and to the objective object of concern. Ultimate concern signifies both man's act of ultimate concern and the ultimacy of the object of concern.

It will be apparent that, for Tillich, there is a double element of risk attached to every act of ultimate concern. On the subjective side, man's acts are always the acts of freedom under the estranging conditions of existence. On the objective side, the object of ultimate concern may not be truly ultimate. This means that any fulfilment of the promise implied by an ultimate concern rests on two conditions; that the person, in fact, be ultimately concerned, and that the concern, in fact, be ultimate. In estrangement, of course, neither of these conditions can be guaranteed.

The key to Tillich's understanding of subject-object transcendence in terms of ultimate concern lies in his statement that the possibility of being ultimately concerned "presupposes the element of infinity in man. Man is able to understand in an immediate personal and central act the meaning of the ultimate, the unconditional, the absolute, the infinite."¹ Since the ultimacy in man is the ultimacy of the ground of being from which, in existence, he is estranged, but by which, he is, nevertheless,

¹Paul Tillich, The Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper, 1957), p. 9.

supported; and since "The ultimate concern is concern about what is experienced as ultimate,"¹ at the point where personal ultimacy and the ultimacy of the content of concern coincide, the "difference between subjectivity and objectivity is overcome."²

It must be admitted that it is not altogether clear how Tillich would wish this understood. The transcending of the subject-object differentiation is clear to the extent that the participation of ultimacy in ultimacy constitutes the reunion of the "essentially one." However, participation has as its opposite pole, individualization or separation. In this respect the subject-object transcendence is not clear since it is difficult to see how such a transcendence could embrace the element of individualization. Tillich's concept of polarity definitely indicates that one pole cannot be affirmed without affirming the other. Yet, the perfect participation implied by a subject-object transcendence would seem to exclude individualization entirely.

The obscurity at this point is brought even more sharply into focus by Tillich's understanding of the holy. He says, "The awareness of the holy is awareness of the presence of the divine, namely of the content of

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 11.

our ultimate concern."¹ The experience of the holy is twofold; it is attractive and it is repulsive. One may gather that in its attractiveness it is man's ultimacy being attracted to the ground of ultimacy, and in its repulsiveness it is man's separation being repulsed by the infinite distance between itself and ultimacy. The attractiveness may, thus, be related to participation, while repulsion may be related to separation. But if at this point the polar character of individualization and participation is strictly maintained, it becomes impossible to avoid the conclusion that individualization is somehow evil. This would not seem to be in keeping with the main thrust of Tillich's thought even though, as pointed out earlier, Tillich failed to make clear whether separation is evil or essential.

In spite of this obscurity the general direction of Tillich's thought is apparent. To the extent that there is an element of ultimacy in man, his encounter with the source of this ultimacy brings a transcendence of the subject-object differentiation. On the other hand, to the extent that man remains, in spite of his ultimacy, bound by the conditions of existence, the ultimacy of the object of his concern appears to him as the "entirely other."

¹Ibid., p. 13.

When a person is ultimately concerned about that which is not truly ultimate, the content of that concern is, for Tillich, an idol. Similarly, the holiness of an ultimate concern which becomes associated with that which is not truly ultimate is "demonic holiness." Every ultimate concern is potentially idolatrous and demonic since everything available to man as an object of ultimate concern is conditional. This means, for Tillich, that at every point there stands between the ultimacy in man and the ultimacy he seeks, some conditional symbol which may be more or less adequate in its ability to symbolize.

B. Symbols.

Tillich's statement in Dynamics of Faith concerning the nature of symbols is very lucid and concise.

"The reason for (the) transformation of concepts into symbols is the character of ultimacy and the nature of faith. That which is the true ultimate transcends the realm of finite reality infinitely. Therefore, no finite reality can express it directly and properly. Religiously speaking, God transcends his own name. This is why the use of His name easily becomes an abuse or a blasphemy. Whatever we say about that which concerns us ultimately, whether or not we call it God, has a symbolic meaning. It points beyond itself while participating in that to which it points. In no other way can faith express itself adequately. The language of faith is the language of symbols."¹

¹Ibid., p. 44f.

Six characteristics of symbols are outlined.

1. Symbols point beyond themselves to something else.
2. Symbols participate in that to which they point.
3. Symbols open up levels of reality which otherwise are closed to us.
4. Symbols unlock dimensions and elements of our souls which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality.
5. Symbols cannot be produced intentionally.
6. Symbols grow and they die.¹

In relation to man's estrangement, the most important aspect of the symbol lies in its participation in "the power of the divine to which it points."² Even though merely a "segment of finite reality," with this participation it becomes possible for the symbol both to reveal the divine and to grasp man with the power of the divine. "Religious symbols are double-edged. They are directed toward the infinite which they symbolize and toward the finite through which they symbolize it. They force the infinite down to finitude and the finite up to infinity. They open the divine for the human and the human for the divine."³

¹Ibid., pp. 41-43

²Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 239.

³Ibid., p. 240.

The danger of idolatry is always present with symbols. The symbol becomes an idol when divinity is ascribed to the symbol rather than to that in which the symbol participates. Thus, even the word God can become an idol according to Tillich. He states, "God is the fundamental symbol for what concerns us ultimately ... In the notion of God we must distinguish two elements; the element of ultimacy, which is a matter of immediate experience and not symbolic in itself, and the element of concreteness, which is taken from our ordinary experience and symbolically applied to God ... In this qualified sense God is the fundamental and universal content of faith."¹ The implication here is that if one were to speak of God as being the non-symbolic, fundamental and universal content of faith, then one would be making an idol of that which is essentially a symbol.

The manner in which Tillich's concept of symbols and his understanding of ultimate concern come together is made clear by his question, "which of the innumerable symbols of faith is most adequate to the meaning of faith? In other words, which symbol of ultimacy expresses the ultimate without idolatrous elements?"² It will be apparent from this that, for Tillich, the object of every

¹Tillich, The Dynamics of Faith, p. 46.

²Ibid., p. 47.

ultimate concern functions symbolically. It will also be apparent that a relationship exists between symbol and ultimate concern with respect to subject-object transcendence. To the extent that the symbol grasps with the power of the divine, the subject-object differentiation is overcome from the direction of objective reality. To the extent that ultimate concern is concerned with ultimacy, the subject-object differentiation is overcome from the direction of subjective reality. Thus, one can conclude that in both poles of the basic structure of being, the power of the ground of being is active in breaking through the effects of estrangement.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

The major points of Tillich's thought may now be summarized. In every respect of his existence, man is faced with hopelessness and destruction while, to meet this situation, every means at his disposal is inadequate, and the very freedom to use them corrupted beyond any hope of repair. Under the anxiety of his estrangement, man is driven to embrace something, anything, with the ultimacy of his concern in order to give meaning and validity to his life. Yet no finite object can warrant such a concern. To be sure, man's immediate awareness of the unconditional does give a certain critical advantage in being able to distinguish the conditional from the unconditional on the basis of the subject-object transcendence. This advantage, however, is off-set by the disadvantage that "The ecstatic character of ... an idolatrous faith" may give the appearance of subject-object transcendence without actually producing it. Moreover, the more genuine the transcendence may appear to be, the deeper will be the consequent "'existential disappointment', a disappointment which penetrates into the very existence of man."¹ On the other hand, even though reconciliation may be a fact, it is not a fact about which man can have an absolute certainty

¹Ibid., p. 12.

since man's ultimate concern may be idolatrous and even the perfect symbol must have a conditional character. It would seem then that, even though one may argue that estrangement is being overcome, the ambiguities and risks involved in reconciliation ultimately give to estrangement the final victory.

While this is indeed the conclusion speculation must reach, it is not a conclusion Tillich can accept as final. On the one hand it cannot be final because idolatry itself is not final. Even in an idolatrous ultimate concern, the concern is valid to the extent that true ultimacy was expected. Moreover even though the ultimacy expected turns out to be merely conditional, the subjective element of ultimacy, the faith, also remains valid as such. "Idolatrous faith is still faith. The holy which is demonic is still holy."¹ On the other hand, Tillich cannot accept a final negative judgement upon the problem of estrangement since, as a Christian, he is profoundly aware that reconciliation is a fact which cannot be denied. Thus one arrives again in Tillich's thought at the paradox inherent in the correlation between philosophy and religion.

While Tillich's attempt to deal with this paradox demonstrates more philosophical and theological integrity than is commonly seen, and while this integrity has been

¹Ibid., p. 16.

greeted with wide-spread respect and acclaim; as stated in the beginning, Tillich's thought has also had the effect of antagonizing both philosophers and theologians. The point of irritation is precisely the apparent contradiction between his philosophy and his theology. This contradiction may now be stated more explicitly in Tillich's terms. Every ultimate concern has its source in a self under the domination of estrangement and every object of concern available to man is conditional. In spite of this, it is possible for man to be ultimately concerned for an actual being which both brings about a reconciliation with ultimacy and liberates man from the conditions of existence. The objections too, may also be stated more explicitly. For the Christian, the fundamental question is whether Christian faith is not the exception to self-dominated concern, and Christ the exception to demoniacally destructive conditionals. For the philosopher the question is whether the answer of reconciliation has not become incomprehensible and alien from the standpoint of anyone asking the question of estrangement. Upon one's appreciation of Tillich's thought at this point hangs one's understanding of all his work.

Tillich asks, "Exactly what can faith guarantee? And the inevitable answer is that faith can guarantee only its own foundation, namely, the appearance of that reality which has created the faith. This reality is the

New Being, who conquers existential estrangement and thereby makes faith possible."¹ At another point he says, "Neither arguments for belief nor the will to believe can create faith."² Thus, for Tillich, faith or ultimate concern is not the product of man in his finitude and estrangement, even though it arises from within him. Man's ultimate concern possesses true ultimacy but this ultimacy is not a possession which he may obtain possession of. In this sense faith is the ultimate concern of the ultimate in man for the ultimate of being itself, from which, the human ultimacy has been estranged. However, to the extent that man can direct his ultimacy it is always directed toward the finite rather than the infinite. Man's ultimacy, therefore, is always conditional in its expression, but never conditional in its nature. That is to say, the unconditional element of the concern and the unconditional element expected by the concern make the faith valid as faith, regardless of any conditional elements of idolatry that may be present. For Tillich then, there are three distinctions where some would expect only two. Distinctions must be drawn not only between idolatry and faith, but also between faith and Christian faith. It is these last two that present the difficulty.

¹Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p. 114.

²Tillich, The Dynamics of Faith, p. 38.

Tillich states, "In terms like ultimate, unconditional, infinite, absolute, the difference between subjectivity and objectivity is overcome. The ultimate of the act of faith and the ultimate that is meant in the act of faith are one and the same."¹ What is being asserted here is that in every ultimate concern of existential man, to the extent that the ultimacy is valid, the ultimacy of man will recognize as itself, the ultimacy that it apprehends. With the subject-object split overcome and transcended, the ultimacy in man will be a participant in the ultimacy of being itself. Not a participant in the sense of one who participates as a part of a whole, but a participant in the sense of one who finds that he is the whole. For Tillich this will be true of every ultimate concern, whether it be Christian or non-Christian.

Thus, the line between Christian faith and non-Christian faith cannot be drawn on the basis of the conditional element of the concern - not even if the conditional element should be Jesus! Nor can it be drawn in terms of the validity of the faith as such or in terms of the validity of faith's participation in the ultimate. For Tillich what makes the Christian different from all others is the fact that the object of Christian

¹Ibid., p. 11.

concern is not just the ultimacy of some conditional object but the ultimacy of the New Being. The ultimate concern of the non-Christian participates in the unconditional at a point where the unconditional still continues subject to the conditions of existence in estrangement. The ultimate concern of the Christian participates in the unconditional at the one point where the unconditional has been victorious over the conditions of existence in estrangement. The distinction between the Christian and the non-Christian lies in the actuality of the New Being - in Jesus, as the Christ. It is not the faith as such, but the point in the unconditional at which the faith participates which sets the Christian apart from the rest of the world.

According to Tillich, the fundamental need of man in his estrangement is neither a return to pure essence nor freedom from essence, but rather, a New Being which would be essential being existing under the conditions of estrangement without being conquered by them. However, the participation in ultimacy which transcends the subject-object separation and which is experienced by the non-Christian, is always a participation in the unconditional as it appears under the domination of the conditions of existence. To the extent that this participation may be lived out in existence, it must be lived out in hopelessness and ultimate frustration. The "guarantee" received by the

unconditional in man upon his apprehension by the unconditional from which he is estranged, can only be the guarantee of continuing domination by estrangement - a guarantee to be dreaded not welcomed. Against this, the guarantee of the ultimate as the New Being is no more valid, but it is radically different. For the first time, the guarantee is that of freedom from the structures of destruction in existence. To be sure, the Christian will remain under the estranged conditions of existence himself. But in the depths of his being, at the point where the subject-object distinction has been overcome, he will know in himself the experience of life in all its victory. The experience is one of liberation and joy.

This then is Tillich's answer to both the theological and the philosophical objections to the apparent contradiction between his philosophy and his theology. The answer to this paradox is another, the paradox of the New Being. In spite of what some Christians believe, Christianity is not justified by some exclusively Christian possession whether that possession be the Christ, Christian faith, the Bible, or the sacraments. Christianity is justified by that which possesses the Christian; the power and victory of the New Being. But if the Christian objection is answered by Tillich's concept of the New Being, so too is the objection of the philosopher. The reconciliation wrought by the New Being is not alien or unintelligible to man in his

estrangement. On the contrary, while one may indeed deny that Jesus as the Christ is the New Being, one cannot deny on philosophical grounds that just such a New Being is the need of man in his existence.

To be sure, the actuality of the New Being, for Tillich does not mean that man need no longer suffer the effects of estrangement. Existence remains estrangement even though the New Being has been received. But it is an estrangement which, for the Christian, is no longer final. As St. Paul put it, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." To the extent that man participates in the New Being he participates in the decisive victory over the power of estrangement. While life must continue under the conditions of estrangement the Christian lives with the certainty that the victory which he now shares only in principle, he will some day share in fulfilment.

The theology of Paul Tillich does not answer the question of estrangement. It does say, in terms that a modern secular world can understand, where, and in what sense the answer has been given.

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MEMORANDUM

TO : THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
FROM : THE CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF THE ARMY
SUBJECT: [Illegible]

1. [Illegible]

2. [Illegible]

3. [Illegible]

4. [Illegible]

5. [Illegible]

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7. [Illegible]

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